

Approved by City Council on April 3, 2017



City Council Special Workshop Meeting February 27, 2017

Call to Order

Mayor Merrifield called the meeting to order in the Council Chambers, Franklin City Hall at 6:00 p.m.

In Attendance

Councilor Clarenbach, Councilor Ribas, Councilor Moquin, Councilor Barton, Councilor Desrochers, Councilor Wells, Councilor Zink, Councilor Dzujna, City Manager Dragon and Mayor Merrifield.

Absent

Councilor Desrochers, Councilor Giunta, Councilor Wells.

Salute to the Flag was led by Councilor Ribas.

City Manager Dragon stated that this is the 2nd workshop as the 1st workshop was on economic development. Tonight's workshop will be about police and fire and she is looking to hold another one next month on the water and sewer departments. Tonight is to focus on police and fire and their challenges with labor, OT, etc. City Manager Dragon is trying to give the council as much information as possible prior to the budget process. She stated we always say yes we can do "that", when asked, but tonight you will see how that has really impacted the departments and personnel as the calls have increased.

Police Department Presentation

Chief Goldstein stated that throughout his years as police chief this is the first time he has addressed this governing body in this regard. He has been dealing with these issues for about forty (40) years and that his pedigree and resume, with his degrees and clinical experience, make him an expert in this field.

Chief Goldstein showed a PowerPoint presentation – he began slide 1 with a quote from Winston Churchill, slide 2 was about common perception of a police officer, slide 3 stated "We have met the enemy and he is us", slide 4 stated "Never let them see you bleed". He shared a video about domestic violence that was strong and an actual event that happened.

He stated that this type of event happens twice a day in Franklin. Last year there were about 100 domestic violence arrests and that doesn't include the felony domestic violence arrests as those go straight to Superior Court and are not counted.

He showed an organizational chart of the police department. When he removed everyone but the patrol officers Franklin has only 15 officers to patrol the streets 24/7. The community has a misconception of how many officers are patrolling the streets.

The next few slides he spoke about were physiological side. Slide 5 was about stress and the phase I – alarm reaction, phase II – resistance and phase III – exhaustion. Chief Goldstein explained how officers go through these phases in their work. Slide 6 was about cortisol which creates sugar but also suppresses the immune system and slide 7 was about the gas response and this occurs for anyone under stress and strain. Slide 8 was about fatigue and how the cycle goes from disrupted sleep to fatigue to inability to cope with stressors and fatigue that can result in mishaps. Slide 9 showed bullet points of what the indicating factors of fatigue might include: broken equipment, excessive O.T., frequent rotating shifts and regular changes in police work. Officers respond to all calls no matter how they are feeling or what is going on in their life. Not sleeping for 17hrs impairs a person's motor skills and is equal to .05 of a person drinking. Not sleeping for 24hrs is equal to .10 of a person drinking which is over the legal limit. Research shows that people who drive a car under the influence drive better than people who are fatigued. 50% of people are involved in work place accidents due to fatigue. Fatigue will also cause more motor vehicle accidents and difficulty dealing with the public.

Slide 10 showed a Franklin lemonade stand with officers buying lemonade and that is one of the good things that happen from the public. Slide 11 was about rules and showed a Facebook photo of a local father and daughter making an obscene gesture and that was to signify that people don't like being told what to do and these are things the officers deal with. A photo of the rear window of a Franklin police car shot out as this is also another element of what the police officers deal with. Slide 12 had a statement "shoot the Franklin cops". Slide 13 stated the money, drugs. Slide 14 was about domestic violence and had a picture of a kitchen with items strewn all over. Mayor Merrifield asked Chief Goldstein that he has stated in the past that Franklin is the domestic violence capital of the state and asked if there was statistical data on that. Chief Goldstein stated that Franklin is busier than Manchester PD in some areas. When Chief Goldstein was hired the manager stated that Franklin is a city and you are a city chief. Mayor Merrifield stated that he feels that some community members don't understand the customer base the police serve. Chief Goldstein stated that male domestic violence victims are 24% and nationally it is 10% as males are less willing to come in and report the violence but on the other hand women have stated they are tired of the violence and are now fighting back. Most DV victims in NH are women and there are no real crisis centers for men to go who are victims of DV.

Slide 15 was about PTSD and Chief Goldstein stated Franklin deals with this on a daily basis. There are 17K police officers in NH and there are 800K police officers in the US and 120K of them have PTSD. There are 50K assaults annually and a police officer dies every 53 hours. Slide 16 was a Thomas Carlyle quote. Slide 17 stated that in 2005 the call volume for the Franklin police department was 14K and today it is 50K. In 1994 they had 17 FT and 4 PT police officers and today they have 19 FT and 2 PT and you can see the staff has not increased in 24 years. Chief Goldstein went on to say that he has some of the best officers anywhere and no one can touch what they handle on a daily

basis. Mayor Merrifield asked of that call volume how much is due to the drug epidemic and Chief Goldstein stated quite a bit. He stated the State Police lab won't take small drugs due to the back log. A good drug investigation takes three (3) months for one (1) case. Councilor Barton asked from 2005 to now what is the highest volume of calls. Chief Goldstein stated domestic violence but that doesn't diminish other types of calls. City Manager Dragon stated that the budget packets do have a breakdown of statistics. Councilor Dzujna thanked the chief for doing this and wished more people came out to hear it. He then asked does the fatigue factor have an impact on calls. Chief Goldstein stated yes but the officers push through it and an example of that is we present good solid cases in court.

Councilor Barton asked what is Manchester's per capita vs. Franklin or officers per person. Chief Goldstein stated Manchester has 210 officers and many individualized units that are not factored into the officer's number. State Police have spent over \$100K to help Franklin with a recent call.

Councilor Zink asked about the two drastic jumps on the number of calls. Chief Goldstein believes it was the change to the new computer system and if everyone remembers in 2009/2010 when the recession occurred and we got a new president, Franklin was considered a training town meaning officers would come here to learn and then leave. Franklin has gotten to the point where that is no longer the case and officers stay. Mayor Merrifield commented that the jump in calls can also have to do with when the drug crisis really took off. City Manager Dragon stated you will also see this in fire. Councilor Zink asked if that was also around the time when section 8 vouchers were more affordable. Chief Goldstein and Mayor Merrifield were unsure.

Councilor Dzujna asked what could fix this. Chief Goldstein stated a number of things as another factor would be education of how we are training and teaching our children.

Councilor Dzujna asked that with all the PTSDs are municipalities opening themselves to lawsuits. Chief Goldstein stated you have to change the here and now and change socioeconomics, housing and education. City Manager Dragon stated that yes Franklin's poverty level is 24% where the state is 6% so that trickles through all departments. Economic Development and the Mayor's Drug Task Force are making changes for the future and we need to continue on. One issue is public perception that money can just go from the city to the school but that will create more problems. Chief Goldstein stated they have ongoing programs to address the issues like PTSD.

Councilor Zink stated that the top number on the chart is 48,757 which is 133 calls a day. City Manager Dragon stated that you can see how many calls each employee is handling and that weighs on a person day after day. Chief Goldstein stated statically when a police officer lives 8-10 years after retirement. Councilor Dzujna stated that some small communities have done away with police departments, like Salisbury, and rely on the State Police. Do we get called to towns like that? Chief Goldstein stated not as much as you would think as those residents have learned to live without. State Police is down 30-40 troopers so if you call them they aren't coming.

Councilor Moquin asked if there is overlap between police and fire and there would be a duplication on the graphs. Chief Goldstein stated yes but you have to keep in mind if the police are called they respond it is counted but fire calls are not included in the police graph.

Mayor Merrifield asked if the chief would recommend the council to do a ride along. Chief Goldstein stated yes but it has to be a few days as not all days are equal as some days there is a low call volume. Mayor Merrifield stated that nothing can compare to living it.

Fire Department Presentation

Chief LaChapelle stated he has been chief for five (5) years and the chief's meet weekly and text, call, email, etc. all the time about things that are going on in the city.

Chief LaChapelle passed out a memo from Concord Hospital about how they saved a life, as within 68 minutes a person went from the incident to the cath lab at Concord Hospital and their life was saved. Years ago EMS always did just general care and today it is just more complex and the equipment is very expensive.

Chief LaChapelle stated that a fire chief that hired him once stated that it is not just about the numbers. He had to take that and really think about how to collect the data. Last year he attended a conference in Virginia and they talked about data and how data lets you learn what your community is about. He stated he does work on the Governors Committee on opioid abuse and the first two meetings were about data and looking at the numbers holistically and the silos of data that is collected and what it means.

Chief LaChapelle talked about the organizational chart for the department, which was page one (1) of the packet. The next page was about tracking emergency incidents for 2016 followed by a chart of calls over the years. He did admit that the way the numbers are collected have changed over the years. Last year they responded to 1,982 calls and those are calls that are toned out and that doesn't include changing light bulbs, banging ice off roofs, etc. He pointed out the time of day statistics and that is for everyday with the busiest from 12:01 pm to 18:00 pm and the day statistics show that Wednesdays and Fridays are the busiest. Ward 3 is the busiest ward, but it also has two (2) nursing homes.

Page 4 of the packet is about the labor workforce and shifts. Chief LaChapelle explained who is in the building Monday-Friday during office hours and the remaining personnel work based on shifts of an average of 42 hours a week. The Deputy Chief will also come back in for all call backs to help out even if he is not on shift. The Chief and Deputy Chief have an agreement and have split up the coverage to help and the Chief covers mutual aid for the east side of the city and the Deputy Chief covers the west side of the city. All shifts are 24/7/365 and have to be covered which requires OT if someone is out for illness or vacation. Shifts worked are a 24 hr shift then two (2) days off and then come back in and work 24 hr shift and then are off for four (4) days. Since Chief LaChapelle has been in Franklin he has seen personnel at least twice on their off cycle doing call backs or doing maintenance on trucks. Prior to six (6) years ago if someone was out that position was left open.

Chief or Deputy Chief would cover one (1) or two (2) hour vacancies, now when someone is out it is not covered with Administrators.

Page 5 of the packet shows there are 14 call staff and 5 of them are also EMS and 1 of them is support only. The highest responder went to 51 significant incidents and 98% of the calls are handled by the full time staff. Back in 2005 there was a discussion about staffing for the future and how the call staff will erode, where in the 80's you had to wait to get on a department but today you have to hire 10 people to get 1. Back in the 80's you got written up for not attending trainings but today you are lucky to get 1 person to attend. The dynamics have changed so much as family comes first not the fire department at one point there were 44 call staff but today it is 14.

Since 1987 the fire department call volume has increased 117% and in 2002 they went to three (3) per shift and the call volume went up 54%. In 2016 the call volume went up 12% from 2015 and 11% of the calls are concurrent. In 2015 they used 100+mg of Narcan and in 2016 they used 40+mg. Full-time staff are not allowed to work more than 37 hours straight and 50% of the staff nap in a chair and don't use the beds due to the call volume. Due to the types of calls the paramedics are dealing with and the areas they go too, they have become numb to what is going on.

Chief LaChapelle stated that Franklin is in the top 3 for NH Communities at risk. The good news is that we can get risk reductions for multifamily. Chief LaChapelle stated it is based on demographics, poverty levels, and schools as 68% of the children of Franklin get free or reduced lunches.

The ambulance went on 50 transports out of town last year so that leaves minimal staff on for up to three (3) hours. Councilor Dzujna asked do hospitals require that. Chief LaChapelle stated yes and State of NH EMS protocols dictate that. The other big issue is the services at Franklin Hospital have changed and they no longer take obstetrics, trauma, stroke, cardiac or emergency transfers. Those patients have to be transported somewhere else like Concord, Laconia, Dartmouth or Manchester.

Chief LaChapelle stated that normally it is cheaper to pay OT than hire another fulltime person. This is no longer the case. There was one fire fighter that worked 937 hours of OT last year and another worked 830 OT and they could care less if they work anymore OT. The fatigue factor is an overabundance due to OT and call backs. Traditionally the fire service doesn't complain but personnel are starting to speak up. In August they had 208 calls when the normal is 130, so it was discussed as to when they call for mutual aid. Franklin has begun to rely on their mutual aid neighbors a lot.

Chief LaChapelle stated that regionalization is where we are at and you can expect to hear more about that in the future.

Chief LaChapelle spoke about areas of strength and our fire department is at the highest level available where we are piloting programs like surgical airways and sedating with meds we carry.

Chief LaChapelle spoke about areas of vulnerability and they are staff retention, paramedic level pay, community demographics, workload with no relief in sight and Franklin Hospital level changes. Councilor Moquin asked to hear more about communities using private EMS. Chief LaChapelle stated that Berlin and Claremont are doing this. Councilor Moquin asked how are they sustaining this as the costs have to be huge given the high cost of equipment, training, etc. Chief LaChapelle is not really sure.

Chief LaChapelle spoke about the OT sheet and it shows how much has been paid out based on the calls. There were also a lot of sick & injured employees and several had the flu and one was out for five (5) months after sustaining an injury in the fire house. When people are out others have to cover their shifts. The maintenance OT is what holds the equipment together as the budget for that is \$15K and other towns spend \$80K+ driving far away just to get items fixed. It is worth paying the guys OT rather than bringing it to a company to repair small items for big costs.

Next sheet in the packet is up staffing and Chief LaChapelle stated anyone who has ancillary duties needs to sign up for up staffing. The next sheet was about call hours and the calls are almost the same as training. The average age of personnel is 44 yrs old so when the call staff age out it will be a different story.

Chief LaChapelle stated that in the past five (5) years he has brought in \$400K in grant money. You have to be creative and a magician to make things work.

City Manager Dragon stated that this was meant to be informative and not discouraging. She wanted the council to get a feeling of what is happening with EMS right now and where police and fire are at as we move forward with the budget process. Councilor Dzujna stated that we want to get the word out to the public for them to understand what is going on with police and fire. City Manager Dragon stated that we can do a press release and get the public to come if we are taking something away and she has sent the notices to the Concord Monitor that these meetings were happening.

City Manager Dragon stated she feels that at the municipal services level anytime faced with challenges they come up with solutions and it makes her nervous with the unknown of the school. She can bring the city budget in under the tax cap, come up with solutions and phase things in overtime but she doesn't have influence over the school to engage in ideas. Councilor Clarenbach stated he feels the challenge is the community has been allowed to erode to real challenging levels and will require short term and long term goals. We have a housing issue not just with lack of housing but the affordability of section 8, and other issues beyond our control so how do we pull this together and figure out how to make improvements. Several of the same residents require high demands on multiple departments time after time. The community also has such high demands for service that under the tax cap we can't afford to pay for paramedics anymore.

Councilor Moquin asked how Franklin Hospital is a critical care access hospital if they don't accept all the services anymore and people are being transported away. Councilor Clarenbach stated that critical care access hospital is a federal designation and requires only an emergency room and the

level of patients that are brought in. Councilor Clarenbach stated that Franklin Hospital doesn't have a surgeon on staff. Chief LaChapelle stated that will become a problem as the regulations state the patient is to be brought to the closest appropriate facility. Anyone with a broken bone will have to go to Laconia or Concord. Councilor Clarenbach stated that Franklin critical access hospital designation is on the thinnest of ice and if that designation leaves he sees the hospital closing. At that point you are going to be looking at doing more like 1500 calls to Concord or Laconia and that would require a lot more full time staff as they will be out of the station all the time. Councilor Moquin stated that would require more OT.

Chief LaChapelle stated that the fire chiefs have been talking about regionalization since the Belmont/Laconia fire chief merger. What it will look like unsure but they are looking at what is the best for all communities. He has spoken with Tilton/Northfield and Franklin Hospital about sharing a paramedic as Franklin will be at 50% paramedic coverage on shift as of March 10.

Councilor Clarenbach stated regionalization will only work if it is at the county level due to the expectation of residents of different towns. Chief LaChapelle stated they have talked about a small scale regionalization with Franklin, Tilton/Northfield and Sanbornton. Councilor Dzujna asked if there has been a county wide conversation about this. Chief LaChapelle stated there has been plenty of conversation but that is where it stops. Councilor Clarenbach stated it will be a monumental lift to get all towns in a county to agree and is a huge undertaking.

Councilor Moquin asked what is the energy around consolidation, as at the last meeting she felt it was open with the Superintendent. City Manager Dragon stated that she believes the Superintendent is open but when the school board changed the momentum was lost. At the next Joint Finance Meeting there will be an updated presentation about consolidation.

Councilor Clarenbach stated that on the Northern Pass letter the last paragraph was interesting. City Manager Dragon stated that it is interesting that the letter came out after she was called to testify at the SEC. She stated they must be responding to the line of questioning that was asked at the hearing. SEC asked her if she is using the DRA numbers and she stated no Franklin will use their own assessor or contract a utilities assessor to get those numbers as the DRA numbers are always so low.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Clarenbach and seconded by Councilor Barton. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauraine G. Paquin

